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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 001705

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NSC FOR GREEN/DORMANDY
STATE FOR P, D, AND SA/INS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MASS](#) [PGOV](#) [NP](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: NSC OFFICIAL ON THE MAOIST INSURGENCY, ELECTIONS

Classified By: Charge Elisabeth I. Millard, reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

1. (C) The Maoist overall objective is the creation of a single-party "People's Republic" in Nepal, according to Major General Kul Bahadur Khadka, co-coordinator of Nepal's National Security Council. Khadka told the Ambassador on August 24 that the Maoist leadership would be willing to achieve that objective by entering the political mainstream, if their ultimate success were assured and if they did not have to surrender all their weapons. Khadka thought the GOI was being more helpful with respect to the insurgency, but hoped New Delhi would arrest more Maoist leaders. He thanked the U.S. profusely for security assistance to date, but noted that Nepal needed more. Finally, he raised concerns regarding the government's ability to conduct successful elections at this time. End summary.

2. (C) General Khadka serves as co-coordinator of Nepal's National Security Council. The NSC in turn serves as a think-tank on security, political and economic affairs for Nepal's National Security Committee, which consists of the Prime Minister, the Defense Minister and the Chief of Army Staff (COAS). (Note: Prime Minister Deuba also serves as the Defense Minister. End Note.) The National Security Council also prepares tactical intelligence summaries from all relevant agencies and distributes them twice daily through the PM and the COAS.

The Maoists and Their Objectives

3. (C) General Khadka began by stating that the Maoists have 9-10,000 armed guerilla fighters. In addition, the Maoists have perhaps 25,000 militia and 75,000 political cadres. Their ultimate objective, according to Khadka, is the establishment of a single party Communist People's Republic. To achieve that goal, Khadka continued, the Maoists were attempting to disrupt and terrorize the regime and people at large and to organize their own armed elements. A major part of their efforts focused on collecting necessary funds through extortion, and occasionally, outright robbery.

4. (C) Khadka noted that the Maoist leadership would like to achieve the establishment of a single-party communist republic by coming into the political mainstream. They realized that staying in the jungle would probably lead nowhere. Unfortunately, it was unlikely that a majority of the armed militants shared these views. Most of the actual Maoist fighters were not educated and they would have no future without their weapons. Indeed, even if peace talks succeeded, many of the militants would presumably try to retain their weapons.

5. (C) Khadka believed that the Maoist leadership would be willing to implement a long-term plan to achieve power. This would involve initially coming into the government and then contesting elections to try to get a majority in the Parliament. The Maoists would also insist, however, on keeping a certain amount of weapons to improve their prospects at the polls. Interestingly, Khadka thought the Maoist leadership unimpressive; Prachanda had been elevated mostly because of a lack of anyone more charismatic, and Bhattarai was brilliant but clearly very erratic.

Peace Talks

6. (C) The Government was moving ahead with preparations for peace talks and had already established a Peace Committee (a body of political leaders) and would soon establish a Peace Secretariat, Khadka said. Nevertheless, the Maoists did not

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appear ready for serious talks at this time.

The International Environment

7. (C) Gen. Khadka conceded that New Delhi was adopting a more helpful attitude with respect to the Maoist insurgency.

Nevertheless, the open border with India remained a serious problem and arms smuggling was occurring on a regular basis. "With money you can buy anything in India, and the Maoists have money," Khadka said. Khadka also pointed out that India's federal system made it absolutely essential that the GON work closely with the governments of the bordering Indian states. He added that, while new Indian Foreign Secretary Saran understood Nepal well and would be very helpful, National Security Advisor J. N. Dixit was a devious man who could prove problematic. Khadka also felt that the Indian government could be doing more to arrest Maoist leaders resident in India. Nepal's northern neighbor, China, was by and large helpful on the insurgency and did not appear to seek an active role in Nepal.

US Assistance

18. (C) Khadka saluted U.S. military assistance to date, noting that the M-16's, night vision goggles and body armor were all making a big difference in the field. "Your assistance to date has been great but unfortunately we need more," Khadka said. He cited the difficulties of fighting an insurgency with only 75,000 RNA troops, particularly in light of Nepal's difficult topography and the RNA's limited mobility.

Elections

19. (C) Khadka confirmed that PM Deuba was obviously interested in moving ahead with parliamentary elections, perhaps beginning in April, even in the absence of any agreement with the Maoists. Khadka noted that he had advised the PM that, if the elections were held on a phased basis with the army moving from one area of the country to another to provide security, the RNA could ensure that the actual balloting went off in a fairly safe environment. While it would be more difficult, the army could also probably provide security for candidates in the run-up to the election in given areas. However, since the army would be rotating out to new areas by phase, it would not be able to provide security for voters after the election. The Maoists presumably would do everything possible to disrupt the elections, including intimidation, and therefore the turnout could be very low and there could be a large spike in violence and killing in the countryside. Khadka worried that the credibility of elections under such circumstances could be questioned.

Comment

110. (C) Khadka's observations on the state of the insurgency are obviously well informed and strike us as fairly reasonable. The Maoists face the problem of turning their growing influence in the countryside into anything resembling real political power. Presumably, the Maoist leadership at least will be interested in examining any plan that allows them to achieve power by entering the political mainstream. Khadka is also correct in pointing out the difficulties the government will face if it decides to move ahead with elections. We are reporting septel our conversation with the Election Commissioner on this topic.

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